

How to Design a Survey Step-by-Step

- 1. Clarify your purpose**
 - Why are you collecting this information?
 - What do you hope to accomplish?
- 2. Identify your target population**
 - What group of people do you want to gather information from/about?
- 3. Decide how you will use (analyze and apply) the data once collected**
 - Don't collect data you won't *use*
- 4. Decide how you will collect the data**
 - Paper-and-pencil
 - Online
- 5. Generate a list of potential questions**
 - Usually include a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions
 - See "Tips for Writing Survey Questions," also in this toolkit
- 6. Choose the best of the potential questions, keeping in mind your goal (see #1 above)**
- 7. Decide a logical order**
 - Put similar question types together
 - Order of questions should flow logically for the person taking the survey
- 8. Format the actual survey**
 - For paper and pencil format, make the actual handout
 - For online, format the questions for display
- 9. Review the survey**
 - Read it over yourself to see if everything makes sense and flows well
 - Have a friend or colleague do the same
 - "Pilot test" the survey with a small group (if possible)
- 10. Make revisions as necessary**

Tips for Writing Survey Questions

How to word questions appropriately

Principle	No	Yes
Be succinct	How long has it been since you have visited this Local Health Department office?	When did you last visit our office?
Be specific	Did you wait long today?	After checking in with reception staff, about how long did you wait to see medical staff?
Ask only one thing in each question	How much do you agree with the following statement? <i>The office staff treated me with respect and answered my questions adequately today.</i>	How much do you agree with the following statements? 1. <i>The office staff treated me with respect today.</i> 2. <i>The office staff answered my questions adequately today.</i>
Don't overlap questions—unless you specifically want to ask about the same thing in different ways	1. Have you visited our office before? ... 5. Is this your first visit to our office?	1. Have you visited our office before?
Don't "lead the witness"	What made your visit a good one today?	How much do you agree with the following statement? <i>I am glad I visited the Local Health Department today.</i>
Use laymen's terms not in-house jargon (including acronyms)	Have you visited other LHDs within the last year?	Have you visited other local health departments in the last year?
Provide <i>N/A</i> , <i>Neutral</i> , and <i>Don't Know</i> choices as appropriate	When did you last visit our office? (<i>within the last week, within the last month, within the last year, more than one year ago</i>)	When did you last visit our office? (<i>within the last week, within the last month, within the last year, more than one year ago, this is my first visit</i>)

Writing quantitative questions

Typical scales provide from 5 to 7 options

- Each answer can be assigned a value from 1 to ____
- Even-numbered scales force people to choose positive or negative

Standard labels/scales include:

Agreement	Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree
Intentions to Perform Behavior	Definitely will not Probably will not Don't know Probably will Definitely will
Multiple choice	What services did you come to the office for today? [choices following] Which of the following staff members did you meet with today? [choices following]
Simple counts	How many times in the last week have you...? After arriving at the office today, how long did you wait before being seen?
Yes/No	Is this your first time visiting the _____ County Public Health Office? [Answers can be assigned a value, e.g., Yes=1, No=0]

Writing qualitative questions

Standard question types include:

Short answer	What was the best part of your visit today?
Free response	What was the best part of your visit today? <i>Please explain what made it the best part.</i>